

# Musical Plays, Comedy and Tragedy in the Indianapolis Theaters

"The Runaways," "Erminie" and Richard Mansfield at English's...Helen Bertram at the Grand...Musical Farce at the Park...Burlesque at the Empire...Theatrical Matters Generally



SCENE FROM "THE RUNAWAYS"

The New Musical Show from the New York Casino, at English's To-morrow Night.

AT ENGLISH'S this week there will be two big musical attractions and a grim tragedy—"The Runaways," from the New York Casino, Francis Wilson's elaborate revival of charming "Erminie," and Richard Mansfield, in his latest drama, "Ivan the Terrible."

"The Runaways" is the first booking of the week. It comes to-morrow evening for a single performance, and it all promises to be a highly entertaining performance. It belongs to the class of theatrical attractions best described as musical trifles, dependent upon pretty chorus girls, a few up-to-date costumes, brilliant stage effects, and a good deal of musical comedy. It has been a run at the Casino that began last spring and continued straight through the summer. In the New York production Fay Templeton and Arthur Dunn scored the greatest hits of their careers as the leading funmakers. Miss Templeton is no longer with the company, but Arthur Dunn continues to play the principal part of the comedy, and has some well-known musical comedy performers as his assistants—notably Helen Lord, who took Edna May's place in "The Belle of New York," Charles Cox, Joseph Carey, Al Garland, William Meehan, J. C. Henderson, Mabel Carrier, Erminie Earle and the D'Arville sisters. There are twenty or more people in the organization. In the chorus, which is said to be the prettiest that has been seen in any of the later New York productions, are three distinct types of beautiful girls—the "Six Widows," the "Daisies" and the "Comic Opera Queens."

The plot of "The Runaways" concerns an American officer who was a writer in his early days and has become a plunger at the race track. He is a confirmed dyspeptic and is the guardian of a pretty army nurse. The general's horse wins the suburban handicap, the horse being ridden by the general's son, who is the black sheep of the family. This annoys a patent medicine man and a confederate of his, who wanted to see another horse win, and these "villains" hatch a plot that provides the complications that follow. The music of the piece was written by Raymond Hubbell, and is said to be exceedingly good. It is understood that Messrs. Shubert, Nixon and Zimmerman expended \$5,000 on the production before it began its career of over six months at the Casino.

One of the most talked-about musical productions of the season is Francis Wilson's elaborate revival of Jakowski's beautiful comic opera, "Erminie," the most beautiful and most acceptable composition of its kind produced during the last decade. For years this charming operatic work has been before the American public, and never yet has the public tired of it. Its presentation at English's next Thursday evening (there will be but one performance here) is reasonably certain to draw a record-breaking audience.

"Erminie" is a production which one doesn't hesitate to praise in advance, for every one knows that its libretto is very amusing and its music delightful from first to last. The piece combines merit with cleverness and beauty with the excellence of its melody. The production this year is said to be beyond anything that has heretofore been attempted by Mr. Wilson and is sure to be a revelation to those who have seen and heard the opera before—and nearly all theatergoers are familiar with "Erminie." It is not hard to believe that the company supporting the star is the most expensive comic opera organization ever got together when one looks over the cast, which includes Jessie Bartlett Davis, the distinguished contralto; Marguerite Sylva, the prima donna soprano; Clara Belle Jerome, the dainty soubrette; Robert Broderick, the heroic basso; Signor Pergini, the well-known tenor; William G. Woodson, the popular baritone, and Jennie Weathersby, the mezzo-soprano. The chorus is a very large one, and special attention has been given to the quality of the voices in it. Of course, Francis Wilson is seen in his celebrated character of "Caddy"—the part which he made famous, and which has always been looked upon as his best part. Miss Sylva takes the title role; Mrs. Davis appears in the male character of Captain Blakelane (the sort of part in which she is at her best); Mr. Broderick appears as the dashing robber, Ravens; Clara Belle

Jerome is the petite Javotte; Mr. Woodson is the Eugene Signor Pergini plays the role of the chevalier, and Jennie Weathersby is cast for her original character, the princess. The performance, with its perfect cast and brilliant setting, should be worth going miles to see and hear. The seat sale opens to-morrow morning.

The greatest dramatic event of the week and, in fact, the greatest dramatic offering at English's since the engagement of Forbes Robertson at that playhouse, will be the appearance of Richard Mansfield next Saturday afternoon and evening, surrounded by a company of over a hundred players. The distinguished American actor was originally booked for a single performance here Saturday evening of the great Russian tragedy, "Ivan the Terrible," in which he has just scored such an emphatic success. Many requests were received during last week by Manager Miller, of English's, from playgoers in Indianapolis and near-by towns who are desirous of seeing Mansfield in his much-talked-about production of "Old Heidelberg," and it was finally

JESSIE BARTLETT DAVIS  
In the Revival of "Erminie" at English's.

arranged late last Friday night that a matinee performance of the beautiful German comedy should be given next Saturday afternoon.

"Ivan the Terrible" is the work of Count Alexis Tolstoy. An imperial censorship over the Russian stage kept this tragedy from the public for a long time. It was, however, acted several times privately before the imperial household and was given a profound impression on the present czar that he abrogated the old law and "Ivan the Terrible" was four years ago presented in St. Petersburg. It ran for three years. Other companies played it all over the empire. It is considered the greatest play of the century, just as it has become Mansfield's masterpiece since the first night of his triumph.

Ivan Vasilyevich, surnamed the Terrible, was born in 1530. In order to comprehend this sublime, yet terrible character, said to be the most cruel man that ever lived, it is necessary to understand something of the influence of the Shuisky. He was neglected, mistreated, insulted; everyone he admitted or turned to for assistance was imprisoned or put to death. Ivan himself was a prisoner in his own palace, neg-

lected and harassed, the victim of a vicious plan to stunt his intellectual growth to such a degree that he would be incapable of rule. The Shuiskys continued their domination over the boy ruler and stopped at nothing to restrain it. They even imprisoned his mother, Ivan's wife, and a vivid account of what he endured in childhood. The enormities he had endured begot an awful hatred in his soul which in turn became like and more awful enormities. When he grew up and held the reins he paid his enemies in kind and with overwhelming measure. They had sowed a whirlwind and a whirlwind they reaped. Ivan stopped at nothing. Irritable, excitable, passionate, nervous, profoundly religious, superstitious, cruel, suspicious of every one, daring anything, his reign became a reign of terror and the fires of his excesses soon consumed himself as they had devasted all about him. The tragedy is in five acts. It opens in the Council Chamber of the Bogyars and deals with the abdication of the czar, some two in the czar's cabinet and discloses Ivan's repentance, his retention of the throne and Boris Godunoff's rise to power. Some one of act two is in Shuisky's house and has to do with the conspiracy against Godunoff and the second scene takes place in the Kremlin across the river. Act four carries back to the czar's apartments and concerns the appearance of the Blood Red Star and the prophecy of Ivan's death. Act five opens in Godunoff's house and reveals his conspiracy with the magicians against the czar and the second scene is in the palace and shows the death of Ivan the Terrible.

"Old Heidelberg," which will be given at the Saturday matinee, has been one of the distinct successes of the season. As presented by Mr. Mansfield, it is a well-prepared English version of the German comedy that has had such wonderful vogue in Europe during the last three years. Mr. Mansfield wisely follows the German text almost line by line, and it is said in New York, during the run of the comedy in the metropolis at the beginning of the season, that the actor deserved great credit for giving an adaptation that remained so true in spirit, in atmosphere and in movement to the original play. Mr. Mansfield will be seen in the role of the young German prince—a character different in every particular from the title role in "Ivan the Terrible." His production of the piece is very elaborate, the scenic environment being exceptionally beautiful.

The Grand-Vaudeville. The bright, particular star of this week's vaudeville bill at the Grand will be Helen Bertram, an Indianapolis girl who has for several years been one of the most popular comic opera prima donnas on the American stage. Miss Bertram has been singing in musical comedy of late and scored one of the strongest hits of her career in the role of the pretty Chicago widow in "The Prince of Pilsen." Miss Bertram appeared in this part for many months and was largely responsible for the popularity which the musical number, "The Song of the Cities," attained. She finally became tired of playing one part over and over again and returned for the company for a vacation, after which she accepted a tempting offer to go on the vaudeville stage for a limited season. She has been in vaudeville for the last six weeks and has been highly successful, from all accounts, at this time of stage work. During her vacation in her home city she will sing a number of new songs and will wear some charming gowns, which were made for her in Paris. The portrait of her on this page shows her in one of her most beautiful "creations."

Feed Hallen and Mollie Fuller, two Indianapolis favorites, will furnish the act second in importance. Their specialty is one-act farces of the kind in which they have been playing ever since they deserted the regular stage for vaudeville. These funmakers—in private life they are Mr. and Mrs. Hallen—have just returned to this country from a very successful trip to Australia. The ex-minstrel, William Windom, will be another feature of prominence on the program. Mr. Windom is the favorite ballad singer with the Primrose and West minstrels when that organization was in its prime. His voice is of most unusual quality and his act promises to be very attractive.

Two specialties, which were seen here early in the season with the Orpheum road show, will be the Milani trio, Italian musicalians, and Edward F. Reynolds, the ventriloquist. The Orpheum show closed this season in Cincinnati last night and the management of the Grand decided to book these acts, both of which are very popular here. Reynolds is a native of Indianapolis, so that the Hoosier capital will be well represented among the Grand's performers this week.

Tom Brown, the whistling comedian, will continue his engagement at the Grand, and other entertainers on the program will be the Avon comedy four, in an absurdity called "The Four of a Kind," and a high-class musical act. As usual, the show will be presented with a new series of bioscope pictures.

The Park—Two Attractions. "The Governor's Son," which had an engagement of more than a common success at the Park last January, will be presented again to-morrow to remain through Wednesday. When here back in the winter Park audiences commended the production, not only for its genuine qualities of amusement, but for the rank of its music as well. Its music is decidedly better than that usually heard in theaters of the popular class, and it is doubtful if its composer, George Cohan, ever produced any better. Some of the songs which run through the play are "The Governor's Son," "The Life," "Yaukie Doodle Doings," and "Soliloquy." The show has about the same amount of plot to it into the comic opera class. The company does not boast of any extraordinary cast, every one of its principals having a turn at the plot, which revolves about a series of marriages, when there is much confusion with the names and the claim a certain husband. When seen here before a number of players gave evidence of ability, with Mr. Cohan's characters, the best singers, and Will A. Halliday was one of the chief funmakers. Some of the others were Hilda Hawthorn, Harry Lester, Louise Pitman, Belle Dorney, Harry Carter, and Charles Pusey. All of these, as well as others who appeared, are still with the company.

"Hello, Bill," a bustling farce-comedy, the first of the kind for this season, comes to the Park on Thursday. This is really a revival along lines so well defined by Charles A. Hoyt. It tells the story of two men, both named Bill, one of whom was caught in a gambling-house raid, and, as he stands before the altar to be married, the sheriff calls and takes him away to serve sixty days in jail. The bridegroom tells his bride that he is going to enlist in the Spanish war, while the other Bill, who has the same name, really becomes the soldier. The bridegroom pays a fine and escapes jail, but keeps in hiding from his wife for sixty days. The plot is a simple one, but in developing the plot, and at every ludicrous turn the play becomes more amusing and entertaining. The producing company is said to be made up of clever players, headed by Harry Hawthorn, who is the star. Other players are Herbert J. Corthell, W. H. Woodside, Caroline MacLean, Gertrude Raymore, Marion Kirby and Margaret Sargent. Although the production has been at the Park in other seasons, it is said to come this time strongly reinforced with talent.

The Empire—Burlesque. The Empire's attraction for the week, opening with the regular Monday matinee, will be Waldron & Bryant's Trocadero Burlesque, a musical farce and vaudeville combination that has been seen here before and which contained many good features upon the occasion of its last engagement at the Indianapolis home of burlesque. This season the company is headed by Anna Hill, a statuesque burlesquer, and Annie Carter, who is said to be a graceful dancer. Tom Haverly, a well-known Irish comedian, is

the leading funmaker of the show. There are two burlesques—"The Miff Family," and a satire on the everlasting popular song of "Havatha." In the latter piece the chorus girls will be seen in Indian costumes which are said to be very becoming. The burlesque is a good deal of money in the hands of the burlesque portion of the entertainment an elaborate scenic and costume equipment.

The vaudeville olio will contain specialties by some well-known performers, including Wink and Mack, in a comic acrobatic act, and the World's Comedy Four, a quartet of singers and comedians who will present a farcical musical sketch.

## NOTE AND COMMENT.

It tooks very much as if that brilliant old pessimist, William Winter, of the New York Tribune, had made a mess of things when he said in his paper recently, while engaged in one of his periodical grumbles, that "there has not been a time in fifty years

impressed with the beautiful furniture he invariably uses where it is possible. In the palace scenes of "Ivan the Terrible" he uses several pieces of rare carved wood that are treasures in themselves, and their care in traveling about the country is entrusted to a man who is supposed to do nothing else but protect them from the almost inevitable damage to be incurred in traveling.

Mr. Mansfield modestly refuses to tell where he gets his rare possessions and what becomes of them when he has used them for a season, and his press agent, with unbelievable good taste, refuses to make up any false stories about them; but one can imagine that he possesses a rarely valuable storehouse. He also refuses to discuss the reason for desiring such beautiful things when the regulation "prop" furniture, built cheaply and lightly for this purpose, looks just as well from the front.

The late Patrick Gilmore, the band master, was a great admirer of Richard Mansfield, whom he knew from the time that he was a youth at his mother's home in London. An old letter written by the musician regarding the great actor has recently come to light and will prove of interest in connection with Mr. Mansfield's appearance here this week in his wonderful new characterization. He had studied "painting," wrote Mr. Gilmore, "and the stage was his fate, and he spent more time in the foyer than in the studio, and finally determined to adopt the profession. His mother so strongly opposed the new venture that she cut off his allowance and he was driven to London without a penny to depend upon. He stayed there two or three years, with the entire to good society, but with little in his pocket. He was told me that some days about all he ate was what he got from the spreads at receptions and parties. He was a capital entertainer, though, and was in demand. One of his most intimate friends was a son of Hewitt Darnley, who was then several good turns. He got into the company of a popular actor, but his first appearance was a failure. Stage fright and discouragement got the upper hand of him and he failed completely. He was bounced. He was told to go to the United States and try his luck in the English provinces in "Pinafore," and Mansfield's name was suggested. He said he would sing a duet with himself, and he did. He sang a soprano and baritone duet and they kept him singing for half an hour. Carle had the part fixed for a friend, but Mansfield made such a hit that he got the place. It was worth \$15 a week and he kept it until he struck for higher wages. That was treason and he was fired. Then he went to New York and I guess everybody knows the rest."

Mark Murphy, the Irish comedian, says that "saying" is as prevalent on the stage as ever before, and that in some companies it becomes contagious, infectious and epidemic. He says that among the comedians who are notorious for indulging in this sort of pastime, Frank Daniels, Willie Collier and Pete Daley are about the worst, and that Weber and Fields, although managers before and that in some companies it becomes contagious, infectious and epidemic. He says that among the comedians who are notorious for indulging in this sort of pastime, Frank Daniels, Willie Collier and Pete Daley are about the worst, and that Weber and Fields, although managers before and that in some companies it becomes contagious, infectious and epidemic.

The recent portrait of Jessie Bartlett Davis, which is reproduced on this page, shows that the famous contralto has changed but little since the days of her success with the Bostonians. After an absence of several seasons from the light opera stage she has returned to that stage at the Grand, to sing in the revival of "Erminie," which is to be seen in Indianapolis this week. She has been receiving the highest praise from the audiences all over the country this season, showing a high level of talent in which she is held by many theatergoers. Mrs. Davis is far more fortunately situated in regard to her work than are the majority of stage folk. She has an engagement only when the fancy moves her, and the rest of the time she spends at her beautiful home in Chicago. She chooses her own part, and, as a lover of home life, and as all Chicago is her friend, it is not strange that her appearance on other cities are less frequent. After the public wishes them, Mrs. Davis went into vaudeville for a while, largely because of personal independence. She has never had in that line of work. She returned to light opera this season at the urgent request of Francis Wilson and the management of the charming "Erminie." Next season she will probably divide her time once more between her Chicago home and the vaudeville stage, as she likes vaudeville immensely.

A writer in the New York Telegram says that women are the mainstay of the metropolitan theater, and that managers who refuse to recognize them as such must suffer disastrous financial consequences. For instance, he says, there is a musical comedy now in New York, which has been running for several weeks, which might have continued throughout the summer, but its main interest is in the plot, which is a musical comedy has sufficient merit to remain in New York until fall, but the playwright, who is also the leading comedian, is stubborn and will not allow the objectionable noise to be left out of the piece. Hence the insistence of the theater's managers that he remove his musical show as soon as possible. The writer in the Telegram does not mention a name, but there is no doubt that he alludes to "The Tenderfoot" and Richard Carle.

The rehearsals for "Woodland," the new comic opera by Gustav Luders and Frank Pixley, have begun in Boston on the stage of the Tremont Theater, where the new musical work is to have its production and two Indianapolis young women are now hard at work learning their parts—Olive North and Mrs. George E. Hunt, each of whom is to have an important role. Bird life is the theme of the piece, which leads one writer on theatrical topics to suggest that inasmuch as birds and beasts are enjoying such singular prominence on the stage to-day, it is surely unfair to ignore the bugs. It would be so easy a matter, he says, to prepare a play for them—say, for instance, a musical comedy having the title of "The Tangled Centipede" or "The Secrets of a Mosquito."

Alice Fischer, the Indiana comedienne who is at present frolicking through the role of Lillian de Montague in the musical comedy, "Tiff, Tuff, Tuff," at the New York Casino, regards her engagement in comic opera as a sort of jest. This is her first appearance in stage work of this class, and it is understood that her debut as a singer was accomplished for the purpose of demonstrating to Manager Fred C. Whitney's satisfaction the versatility of the actress from Terre Haute. It is understood that Mr. Whitney has engaged her to star next season under his management. Miss Fischer's latest portrait appears on this page.



THE MELANI TRIO

Italian Musicians in the Grand's Vaudeville Bill.

## The Theaters of New York

"The Shepherd King," with its Costly Equipment...Two Plays That Failed...Edna Wallace Hopper Impersonates Herself...The Hour Glass"

Correspondence of the Indianapolis Journal.

NEW YORK, April 15.—A noteworthy drama is the new one, entitled, "The Shepherd King." But will it go long? Or will it stop short? Expert judgment is reserved as yet, and the multitude has not made up its mind. This is a Biblical play, and for that reason no one can forecast its fate. Its story is based on the Old Testament, its shepherd king being David, the sweet singer and swift slinger. It is not a Christian piece, but Jewish; nor is it religious, but patriotic, rather, with Israelite nationalism; yet its appeal is to those people, Christian and Jew alike, who believe that the book of Samuel is Holy Writ. It is too soon to say how it will strike them. The certainty about the production is its great cost.



ALICE FISCHER

The Indiana Actress, Now Appearing in "Tiff, Tuff, Tuff," in New York.

Wright Lorimer, who wrote it jointly with Arnold Reeves, raised the capital among his relatives, directed the preparations and acts the role of David, says that the investment reached \$50,000 before the curtain was raised. I know something about true and false theatrical figures, and I think that the cost of this production is a record. It has cost more than a hundred and fifty costumes, the finely printed portraits and biographies that have been distributed in vast quantities, and the many other preliminary outlays can't have amounted to less than half of \$50,000 and maybe two-thirds if there was much waste of money. All this bread cast upon the waters may come back in multiplied form to say nothing of pies and cakes—if the masses of Americans will but cut the original cake as they did "The Christian" and "Ben-Hur," with voracity. If they won't—well, Mr. Lorimer will have paid dearly for some experience.

The art of "The Shepherd King" is good and the literature is bad. The representation to our eyes of David summoned from his pastures to beguile the melancholy of Saul with songs, of his going out to slay the giant Goliath and of his rise to the throne of Israel is as impressively pictorial. And the introduction of Samuel the prophet. Enter the witch, Saul the misanthrope and Jonathan the loving is calculated judiciously for a stage show. So is the fictional interpolation of a fond princess for a sweetheart to David. But what our ears hear is much less satisfactory. The language is modern and commonplace except when taken from the Bible. It seems to me that the form of the composition should have



RUTH HALBERT

In "The Governor's Son" at the Park.

been metrical. Anyway, a dignity of diction is needed and is lacking. As it is, what we hear does not accord with what we see, and thus two of our senses are set against each other in a contradiction of pleasure and pain. David and his Michael are a gracefully picturesque name, for Wright Lorimer is handsome and May Buckley is pretty; but May makes the Israelite princess a charming girl of the present day, in manner as well as in speech, while her lover is consistently different. Besides that incongruity, the actor is an utter stranger to New Yorkers and so, very happily, has no personality other than that of David; but the actress is well known to us on the stage for her own cleverness and off the stage for having been the cause of a maniac admirer's pistol shot in a Broadway restaurant. However, I say to Mr. Lorimer, in the scriptural phrase often spoken in his drama and recently rendered into slang by Dowle's use of it, "Peace be with thee!"

You will never see two of the new plays in Indianapolis. They are dead at the early age of six days. Then why write more about obituary items? Because their brief struggles to live were interesting to those who like to watch dramatic phenomena. An African Millionaire and "The Supper of Suez" will not be charged up against the reputation of Fred W. Sidesy and Paul Armstrong to discourage them. Who remembers Belasco's "Younger Son," which was killed in half a week, or Gillette's "Ninety Days After Date," which survived miserably a month at a cost to him of \$50,000? Those two men have grown wealthy and wiser and so may the other two. What proved a mistake was made with "An African Millionaire" by placing it on the very stage where "The Amateur Crackman" had prospered three months. Because a gentlemanly burglar had been a favorite in the one play it was expected that a gentlemanly bunco swindler would become as popular in the other. This confidence man operates against one victim only—a millionaire who has wronged him financially and so exoused, if not justified, a recourse to the eye-for-an-eye doctrine.

Colonel Clay sets out with his wife to get by tricks and devices a compensatory amount of Sir Charles Vandrift's wealth. They sell gold bricks to him in the forms of paste diamonds that seem to be rare gems, a bogus painting purporting to be an old masterpiece, and a lot of counterfeit commercial papers. Vandrift is a self-made and self-satisfied millionaire, and Clay is so clever a rogue that, under the mitigating circumstances, the author was not charged up against the reputation of Fred W. Sidesy and Paul Armstrong to discourage them. Who remembers Belasco's "Younger Son," which was killed in half a week, or Gillette's "Ninety Days After Date," which survived miserably a month at a cost to him of \$50,000? Those two men have grown wealthy and wiser and so may the other two. What proved a mistake was made with "An African Millionaire" by placing it on the very stage where "The Amateur Crackman" had prospered three months. Because a gentlemanly burglar had been a favorite in the one play it was expected that a gentlemanly bunco swindler would become as popular in the other. This confidence man operates against one victim only—a millionaire who has wronged him financially and so exoused, if not justified, a recourse to the eye-for-an-eye doctrine.

The other six-day-old play that is dead, "The Superstitions of Sue," had farcical ideas enough for a long and merry life if they had been made the most of. And I should say that Paul Armstrong might regret that it for vaudeville, for which he has written hitherto, by condensing it to twenty minutes. Sue believes that nothing but bad luck can come of a betrothal made on a Friday that happens to be also the 13th day of a month, and for that reason she declines to marry the man she loves. She means to accept it on the morrow. In the interval the dejected Jim, instead of suicide by his own hand, hires a stranger to kill him in the morning. When he learns of Sue's purpose he strives to escape the execution of his own sentence, but he doesn't know the assassin by sight nor the nature of the proposed homicide, and therefore is in mortal terror of every unknown man who comes nigh. Among his innocent visitors whom he suspects are an Oriental fakir with a poisonous snake, a subway blaster with a red flag of danger, a pugilist notorious for having killed his man and others with various ways of death at their command, including a voluptuous girl selling health pills, and, for all that he knows, might come knock-out doses. Your American sense of humor tells you that a busy evening of good fun should have been wrought from that



CAROLINE McLEAN

In "Hello, Bill!" at the Park.



RICHARD MANSFIELD

Who Will Play "Ivan, the Terrible," and "Old Heidelberg" at English's.



VESTA TILLEY

The English Comedienne, Who Returns to London This Week.